

Younger adolescents get ready to receive COVID-19 vaccine

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH and KATHLEEN FOODY and SOPHIA TAREEN
Associated Press

MISSION, Kan. (AP) — Parents, schools and vaccine clinics rushed to begin inoculating younger adolescents Tuesday after U.S. regulators endorsed Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine for children as young as 12, a decision seen as a breakthrough in allowing classroom instruction to resume safely around the country. A handful of cities started offering shots to children ages 12 to 15 less than a day after the Food and Drug Administration gave the vaccine emergency

use authorization for that age group. Most communities were waiting for a federal advisory committee that meets Wednesday to sign off on the move, while anxious families called clinics and pharmacies to ask about the soonest appointments.

In Atlanta, 12-year-old Jane Ellen Norman got her first dose of the Pfizer vaccine at Mercedes-Benz Stadium on Tuesday morning. The girl said she looked forward to having "a little bit more freedom."

Her mother, English Norman, said she also booked an appointment for her 14-year-old son immedi-

TEEN SPIRIT



English Norman and her 12-year-old daughter, Jane Ellen Norman, pose for a photo outside Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta on Tuesday, May 11, 2021.

Associated Press

ately after learning that the FDA on Monday had declared the vaccine safe for the nearly 17 mil-

lion 12- to 15-year-olds in the U.S. Now, the entire family — including Norman's husband, a physician, and

their 17-year-old son — has begun the vaccination process.

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Younger adolescents get ready to receive COVID-19 vaccine

Continued from Front

"We're five for five," the 52-year-old artist said.

Most COVID-19 vaccines worldwide have been authorized for adults. Pfizer's vaccine is being used in multiple countries for teens as young as 16, and Canada recently became the first to expand use to children 12 and up. Parents, school administrators and public health officials elsewhere have eagerly awaited approval for the shot to be made available to more young people.

The official sign-off on the vaccine's use in the 12-15 age group will not occur until at least Wednesday, when the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention committee meets. Local governments that began offering shots right away viewed the FDA decision on Monday as enough of a green light to start the process.

"Under all relevant legal authority, once the FDA gives approval, a prescriber is permitted to prescribe the vaccine," Kelly Cofran-cisco, a spokesperson for Pennsylvania's Montgomery County, said as shots for residents 12 and up started Tuesday.

In the Kansas City area, Children's Mercy Hospital has run vaccine clinics for 16- to 21-year-olds since last month and plans to expand them to cover the younger ages soon. Dr. Ryan McDonough, a pediatrician who oversees the COVID-19 vaccine clinics, said he has been deluged with calls from patients and texts from friends and relatives wanting to sign up their kids.

"It is about getting back to normal," McDonough said. "It is about getting their kid in school five days a week.

It is about going to see grandma and grandpa. It is about getting back to sports. It is all about normalcy, and people just want to get back to pre-pandemic life."

she said. "But we at this time have let those individuals know, 'Hey, we cannot vaccinate that age group just yet.'"

Chicago, meanwhile, said it was ready to begin vac-

together," Arwady urged in a news release.

Fifteen-year-old Elizabeth Goluszka was ready. For more than a year, she and her friends have celebrated birthdays and

with friends," she said.

Dr. Monica Verduzco-Gutiérrez said her son, Nicolas, had hoped to be part of the clinical trials for the Pfizer but they were no longer signing up participants by the boy's 12th birthday. The family relocated this summer to San Antonio when Verduzco-Gutierrez accepted a new job and it's been difficult for Nicolas to make friends or explore much.

Attending classes in person helped, but there's not much time to socialize at school. Masks and social distancing don't make it any easier either, he said, and he's looking forward to getting vaccinated.

"It will be really nice to be able to say, 'Hey, want to go get ice cream or something?'" Nicolas said.

But not everyone is eager. Polling by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that just three in 10 parents of children ages 12-15 say they would get their child vaccinated as soon as possible.

One-quarter said they would wait a while to see how the vaccine is working. Indianapolis parent Inna Ekhaus said it was a "no-brainer" for her and her husband to get vaccinated to curb the spread of COVID-19 and to protect themselves. But after doing a risk-benefit analysis, she does not plan to take the couple's two sons, ages 13 and 10, to get inoculated. Ekhaus said her boys, who are otherwise healthy, got COVID-19 in October and reported only minor symptoms.

"For the kids, I don't think the due diligence has been done to show the long-term effects, and children's bodies are still developing," said the 38-year-old tech worker. □



Jane Ellen Norman, 12, holds vaccination cards for her and her 14-year-old brother Owen outside Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta on Tuesday, May 11, 2021.

Associated Press

The Iowa-based grocery store chain Hy-Vee, which has 278 stores in eight Midwestern states, was looking to begin offering the vaccine to the younger adolescents as soon as Thursday.

Interest has been strong among parents, who deluged stores with calls and emails after the FDA signed off on the vaccine, Hy-Vee spokesperson Christina Gayman said.

"Some people tried to go ahead and go online and make an appointment,"

cinating people between 12 and 15 but would wait until Thursday to start administering shots. The city's public health commissioner, Dr. Allison Arwady, noted that the communities with the lowest vaccination rates continue to have the highest numbers of confirmed COVID-19 cases and rates of hospitalization and death — even in teens and young adults.

"Help us increase vaccine uptake and get past COVID by bringing your whole family to get vaccinated

holidays at a distance. The teenagers left gifts outside each other's homes as a replacement for the parties they planned and then canceled as the pandemic wore on. Elizabeth said she also missed dance competitions and chatting with friends over lunch at Batavia High School in Chicago's western suburbs.

"I'm just so looking forward to getting back to a sort of normal high school experience, like having the homecoming dance and being able to have lunch

Judge dismisses NRA bankruptcy case in blow to gun group

By JAKE BLEIBERG and
MICHAEL R. SISAK
Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — A federal judge on Tuesday dismissed the National Rifle Association's bankruptcy case, leaving the powerful gun-rights group to face a New York state lawsuit that accuses it of financial abuses and aims to put it out of business.

The case was over whether the NRA should be allowed to incorporate in Texas instead of New York, where the state is suing in an effort to disband the group. Though headquartered in Virginia, the NRA was chartered as a nonprofit in New York in 1871 and is incorporated in the state.

Judge Harlin Hale said in a written order that he was dismissing the case because he found the bankruptcy was not filed in good faith.

"The Court believes the NRA's purpose in filing bankruptcy is less like a traditional bankruptcy case in which a debtor is faced with financial difficulties or a judgment that it cannot satisfy and more like cases in which courts have found bankruptcy was filed to gain an unfair advantage in litigation or to avoid a regulatory scheme," Hale wrote.

His decision followed 11 days of testimony and ar-



In this Feb. 29, 2020, file photo, National Rifle Association Executive Vice President and CEO Wayne LaPierre speaks at Conservative Political Action Conference, CPAC 2020, in Oxon Hill, Md.

Associated Press

guments. Lawyers for New York and the NRA's former advertising agency grilled the group's embattled top executive, Wayne LaPierre, who acknowledged putting the NRA into Chapter 11 bankruptcy without the knowledge or assent of most of its board and other top officers.

"Excluding so many people from the process of deciding to file for bankruptcy, including the vast majority of the board of directors, the chief financial officer, and the general counsel, is nothing less than shocking," the judge added.

Phillip Journey, an NRA board member and Kansas judge who had sought to have an examiner appointed to investigate the group's leadership, was concise about Hale's judgment: "1 word, disappointed," he wrote in a text message.

Lawyers for New York Attorney General Letitia James argued that the case was an attempt by NRA leadership to escape accountability for using the group's coffers as their personal piggybank. But the NRA's attorneys said it was a legitimate effort to avoid a

political attack by James, who is a Democrat.

LaPierre testified that he kept the bankruptcy largely secret to prevent leaks from the group's 76-member board, which is divided in its support for him.

The NRA declared bankruptcy in January, five months after James' office sued seeking its dissolution following allegations that executives illegally diverted tens of millions of dollars for lavish personal trips, no-show contracts and other questionable expenditures. "The NRA does not get to dictate if and where it will

answer for its actions, and our case will continue in New York court," James tweeted after the ruling was made. "No one is above the law."

James is New York's chief law enforcement officer and has regulatory power over nonprofit organizations incorporated in the state. She sued the NRA last August, saying at the time that the "breadth and the depth of the corruption and the illegality" at the NRA justified its closure. James took similar action to force the closure of former President Donald Trump's charitable foundation after alleging he used it to advance business and political interests.

Shannon Watts, who founded Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, said in a series of tweets that the bankruptcy dismissal "comes at the worst possible time for the NRA: right as background checks are being debated in the Senate."

"It will be onerous if not impossible for the NRA to effectively oppose gun safety and lobby lawmakers while simultaneously fighting court battles and mounting debt," said Watts, whose organization is part of the Michael Bloomberg-backed Everytown for Gun Safety. □

Offshore wind project seen as key to clean energy gets OK

By PATRICK WHITTLE
Associated Press

An offshore wind project off Massachusetts that would create enough electricity to power 400,000 homes and is touted by backers as a key piece of America's transition to renewable energy was approved Tuesday by the federal government. The 800-megawatt Vineyard Wind project, south of Martha's Vineyard near Cape Cod, would be the first utility-scale wind power development in federal waters. The nearly \$3 billion project is a critical part of

the Biden administration's plan to grow renewable energy in the U.S.

The approval of the project, which could be completed in about two years, came after decades of debate about the sustainability of U.S. offshore wind. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland said the approval will create thousands of jobs and is a step toward President Joe Biden's plan for 30 gigawatts of offshore wind by 2030. "It will create jobs that will support families, boost local economies and address climate injus-

tice," Haaland said. "More importantly, it will create a new generation of clean energy jobs and leave a livable planet for future generations."

The project would consist of up to 84 wind turbines located 12 nautical miles off Martha's Vineyard. The project and Ocean Wind, a proposed 1,100-megawatt offshore wind project off New Jersey, are keystones in the Biden administration's push to grow offshore wind as a way to fight climate change and create jobs.

Vineyard Wind follows the



In this Aug. 15, 2016 file photo, three of Deepwater Wind's five turbines stand in the water off Block Island, R.I., the nation's first offshore wind farm.

Associated Press

scrapped Cape Wind project, which failed after opposition from some high-profile liberals and conservatives alike. Supporters of Vineyard Wind have said

the newer project is better sited than Cape Wind, which would've been closer to shore, and that it's more in tune with today's political climate. □

Prosecutor plans to seek death penalty in spa shootings

By KATE BRUMBACK

Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — A man accused of killing eight people, six of them women of Asian descent, in shootings at three Atlanta-area massage businesses was indicted Tuesday on murder charges by two separate grand juries, and one prosecutor filed notice that she'll also seek hate crime charges and the death penalty.

A Fulton County grand jury indicted Robert Aaron Long, 22, in the March 16 slayings of Suncha Kim, 69; Soon Chung Park, 74; Hyun Jung Grant, 51; and Yong Ae Yue, 63.

A separate grand jury in Cherokee County indicted Long for a separate shooting there that resulted in the killings of Xiaojie "Emily" Tan, 49; Daoyou Feng, 44; Delaina Yaun, 33; and Paul Michels, 54.

Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis also filed notice that she intends to seek hate crime charges and the death penalty against Long, who is white. The hate crime charges are based on the actual or perceived race, national origin, sex and gender of the four women killed, the notice says.

There was no immediate filing in online court records in Cherokee County to indicate whether District Attorney Shannon Wallace intends to seek hate crimes charges or the death pen-



In this Wednesday, March 17, 2021 file photo, A make-shift memorial is seen outside a business where a multiple fatal shooting occurred on Tuesday, in Acworth, Ga.

Associated Press

alty.

Georgia's new hate crimes law does not provide for a stand-alone hate crime. After a person is convicted of an underlying crime, a jury must determine whether it's a hate crime, which carries an additional penalty.

The Fulton County indictment charges Long with four counts of murder, four counts of felony murder, five counts of assault with a deadly weapon, four counts of possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony and one count of domestic terrorism, according to online records.

The domestic terrorism charge says Long commit-

ted a series of illegal acts "which were interrelated by distinguishing characteristics, with the intent to cause serious bodily harm and to kill individuals and groups of individuals, and with the intent to intimidate the civilian population of this state and of its political subdivisions."

Four of the aggravated assault charges have to do with the shootings of the four victims who died. For the fifth, the indictment says Long pointed a gun at another woman, causing her "reasonable apprehension of immediately receiving a violent injury." Willis' notice of intent to seek hate crimes charges says

she was targeted based on her actual or perceived sex and gender.

The charges in the Cherokee County indictment are related to the shooting at a spa near suburban Woodstock in which four were killed and one person was wounded. The charges include four counts of malice murder and four counts of felony murder.

Willis' decision to seek the death penalty is a departure from her stance during her campaign to be district attorney last year.

During a candidate forum last year, Willis answered yes when asked: "Will you commit to refuse to seek the death penalty?"

The killings are eligible for the death penalty because each was committed while Long was in the act of committing another capital offense, namely the killings of the victims, Willis' notice of intent says.

Each killing was also "outrageously or wantonly vile, horrible, or inhuman in that it involved depravity of mind" and was committed during an act of domestic terrorism, the notice says.

Police have said Long shot and killed four people, three of them women and two of Asian descent, at Youngs Asian Massage near Woodstock just before 5 p.m. on March 16.

He also shot and wounded a fifth person, investigators said.

He then drove about 30 miles (50 kilometers) south to Atlanta, where he shot and killed three women at Gold Spa before going across the street to Aromatherapy Spa and fatally shooting another woman, police have said. All of the Atlanta victims were women of Asian descent.

Long's parents called authorities to help after recognizing their son in still images from security video that the Cherokee County Sheriff's Office posted on social media.

They provided cellphone information that allowed authorities to track their son to rural Crisp County, about 140 miles (225 kilometers) south of Atlanta. □

Suit: Workers lured from India paid \$1.20 per hour for years

By DAVID PORTER

Associated Press



People stand near the entrance to the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Robbinsville Township, N.J., Tuesday, May 11, 2021.

Associated Press

FBI agents were at the sprawling site of a Hindu temple Tuesday as a lawsuit filed in federal court alleged workers from marginalized communities in India were lured to the U.S. and forced to work long hours for just a few dollars per day to help build the temple.

The lawsuit accuses the leaders of the Hindu organization known as Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha, or BAPS, of human trafficking and wage law violations.

An FBI spokesperson confirmed that agents were at

the temple on "court-authorized law enforcement activity." One of the attorneys who filed the suit said some workers had been removed from the site Tuesday. "It is even more disturbing that it has gone on for years in New Jersey behind the temple's walls," Werner, of Decatur, Georgia, said Tuesday outside the gates of the temple. "This is 200 workers who were behind these fences for sometimes a year or two years or even longer, paid about \$1.20 an hour, working in hazardous condi-

tions, not allowed to leave through these gates without being accompanied by somebody from BAPS."

The lawsuit says more than 200 workers — many or all of whom don't speak or understand English — were coerced into signing employment agreements in India over the last several years to work at the Hindu temple in Robbinsville, outside Trenton. They traveled under R-1 visas, which are meant for "those who minister, or work in religious vocations or occupations," according to the lawsuit. □

U.S. unions file first trade labor complaint against Mexico

MEXICO CITY (AP) — U.S. and Mexican unions on Monday filed the first labor complaint against Mexico under the U.S.-Mexico-Canada free trade pact.

The complaint argues that Mexico has not lived up to its pledge under the trade accord, known as the USMCA, to guarantee workers the right to freely organize and join the union of their choice.

The complaint centers on the Tridonex auto parts assembly plant in the Mexican border city of Matamoros where workers have been fighting to join a new union.

The outside organizer of that union, lawyer Susana Prieto, has been jailed, harassed and prohibited from traveling to Tamaulipas, the state where Matamoros is.

"I still cannot go to Tamaulipas, nor travel abroad, nor live in any state other than Chihuahua," Prieto said.

Prieto said about 600 union supporters have been fired from the Matamoros plant in retaliation for their fight to oust an old-guard union. In a statement, Prieto said: "We are fighting so that no one ever is afraid of freely electing the union they



In this Nov. 30, 2018 file photo, President Donald Trump, center, sits between Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, right, and Mexico's President Enrique Peña Nieto after they signed a new United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement that is replacing the NAFTA trade deal, during a ceremony at a hotel before the start of the G20 summit in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Associated Press

wish to represent them and to make history, ending several generations of modern slavery."

In 2019, Prieto led a historic and largely successful battle for higher wages in Matamoros, but she was arrested for allegedly inciting a riot, threats and coercion stemming from a protest at a local labor board that sought to revoke an

existing union at a factory and install a new one. In return for the charges being dropped, she had to adhere to the unusual travel restrictions.

Mexico's old-guard unions often linked to the former governing party signed thousands of "protection" labor contracts in the past, often before factories even opened. They guarantee

employers labor peace and low wages, but workers often couldn't vote in their contract negotiations or for their union leaderships, except by show-of-hands votes. The USMCA sought to stem the flood of manufacturing jobs moving to Mexico to take advantage of wages that amount to a dollar or two an hour. The Tridonex plant

operates for a U.S. company that moved part of its manufacturing to Mexico. Under the trade pact, Mexico agreed to reform its labor laws to guarantee secret-ballot votes on union representation and contracts and the right to organize freely. It also requires that 40% to 45% of auto content be made by workers earning at least \$16 per hour.

If Mexico doesn't comply with the new rules, under the USMCA it has agreed to dispute-resolution panels, which could include banning a factory's product from entering the United States.

When the old North American Free Trade Agreement was approved in 1994, leaders promised it would boost Mexico's wages, something that never happened, in part because of unrepresentative unions.

Average Mexican industrial wages remain about one-tenth of prevailing U.S. rates. The Mexican government has promised to enforce the labor law reforms, but it has been a difficult fight with deeply entrenched old-guard unions. □

U.S. Treasury sanctions 7 Lebanese tied to Hezbollah finances

BEIRUT (AP) — The U.S. Treasury Department on Tuesday imposed new sanctions on seven Lebanese linked to the militant Iran-backed Hezbollah group and its financial arm.

The measures are the latest against Hezbollah, which Washington considers a terrorist group and has targeted with penalties for years. The development comes as Lebanon is experiencing the worst economic and financial crisis in its modern history, including a loss of trust in the country's once booming banking sector.

The Treasury said six of the seven sanctioned were the group's "shadow bankers," who used the cover

of personal accounts at certain Lebanese banks to evade sanctions against Hezbollah's financial arm. They transferred approximately \$500 million over the past decade, it said.

The seventh sanctioned person, Ibrahim Daher, is one of Hezbollah's chief financial executives who oversees the group's overall budget, including the funding for its operations. The Treasury said al-Qard al-Hasan Hezbollah's financial arm which the U.S. has sanctioned since 2007 has taken a more prominent role over the years. Founded since 1982 and registered as a charity in Lebanon, the association is used by Hezbollah to

gain access to the international financial system, the Treasury said.

While the alleged charity "purports to serve the Lebanese people, in practice it illicitly moves funds through shell accounts and facilitators," the Treasury said. "By hoarding hard currency that is desperately needed by the Lebanese economy, (it) allows (Hezbollah) to build its own support base and compromise the stability of the Lebanese state."

Al-Qard al-Hasan, considered Lebanon's largest non-banking financial institution, stepped in amid the latest economic crisis to provide a vital lifeline for many. It has seen a signifi-



In this Nov. 3, 2014 file photo, Hezbollah leader Sheik Hassan Nasrallah addresses supporters ahead of the Shiite Ashura commemorations, in the southern suburb of Beirut, Lebanon.

Associated Press

cant increase in clients. Hezbollah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, recently said the association has provided \$3.7 billion in loans to some 1.8 million people since its founding.

Hezbollah "continues to abuse the Lebanese financial sector and drain Lebanon's financial resources

at an already dire time," said Andrea Gacki, director of the Treasury's office of foreign assets control.

"Such actions demonstrate (Hezbollah's) disregard for financial stability, transparency, or accountability in Lebanon," she added. □

Spain adopts landmark law to protect 'gig' delivery workers

By **ARITZ PARRA** and
RENATA BRITO

Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — Spain approved a pioneering law Tuesday that gives delivery platforms a mid-August deadline to hire workers currently freelancing for them and that requires transparency of artificial intelligence used to manage workforces.

The royal decree passed by the center-left ruling coalition immediately affects some 30,000 couriers. It comes in the wake of a ruling by Spain's top court last year and at a time when other countries in Europe and elsewhere are deciding on a labor model for the so-called gig economy, which is often blamed for precarious jobs and low salaries. That's because, until now, gig and other contractor workers had to pay social security fees from their own pockets if they wanted to receive benefits including unemployment subsidies and a public pension.

App-based food delivery businesses say that the law threatens a 700-million-euro (\$851 million) industry in Spain, and some of the couriers took to the streets on Tuesday in different cities because they say that



Delivery workers protest in front of the Spanish Parliament in Madrid, Spain, Tuesday, May 11, 2021.
Associated Press

remaining self-employed benefits them.

Francisco López, 37, said he was making 2,400 euros (\$2,900) per month working an average of seven hours every seven days of the week, more than he could have made at his previous job at Barcelona.

"A lot of us have families and children. By working for more than one company we can adjust our schedule. The rates are currently not the best, but they do offer us an economic cushion," said López, who

has managed to send remittances to his relatives in Colombia during the pandemic. But Labor Minister Yolanda Díaz said Spain was "at the vanguard" in taking legislation on the relationship between delivery platforms and their workforce. "The world is looking at us," Díaz told reporters following a weekly Cabinet meeting and adding that it reflected the "new winds" that, across the world, deliver welfare to citizens. In the United States, Joe Biden's government has

rolled back on a rule from his predecessor's administration that would have made it easier to classify workers as independent contractors, blocking a change supported by delivery and ride-hailing services. The executive branch of the European Union is also currently consulting with the public on potential rules that could be applied across the bloc. The Spanish government's decree doesn't need parliamentary approval and is the result of an agreement

with the country's main workers' unions and industry associations, although smaller groups representing the interests of the food delivery platforms claim they have been sidelined in the negotiations.

APS, which groups on-demand service providers Deliveroo, Stuart, Glovo and Uber Eats, the main players in the food delivery market, condemned the government's move.

"While Spain claims to be a start-up nation, this is the first law in Europe that forces a technological company to disclose its algorithms," said APS in a statement.

During negotiations, the government agreed to initially restrict the need for work contracts to delivery companies operating digital platforms. That leaves out the domestic care and cleaning services industries where the gig work model is also spreading.

The law makes mandatory for all businesses the ground-breaking requirement of having to hand over to the workers' legal representatives information about how algorithms and artificial intelligence systems function in assigning jobs and assessing performance, among other aspects. □

China issues total ban on synthetic cannabinoids

BEIJING (AP) — China on Tuesday said it will add all synthetic cannabinoids to its list of banned drugs, in what it described as a first in the world, to curb their manufacturing, trafficking and abuse.

It is the second time that Chinese authorities have imposed a class-wide ban on a substance, after all fentanyl-related drugs were controlled in 2019.

Synthetic cannabinoids are human-made chemicals that act on the same brain receptors as the main active ingredient in marijuana. However, they can be toxic and cause "serious side effects that are very different from those of marijuana," according to

the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The United States says China is a key source of synthetic drugs which are then shipped to users in the U.S.

Chinese officials said 18 other new psychoactive substances will also be banned. The changes take effect July 1.

Authorities said 1,047 types of new psychoactive substances had appeared as of the end of 2020, of which about 450 were found in the last five years. Between 2018 and 2020, about 300 cases of what is locally known as "Nasha" synthetic cannabinoids were uncovered in Xinjiang, while more than

300 fluroroketamine cases were found in the southern region of Guangxi, officials said.

Last year, Shandong narcotics authorities uncovered the large-scale manufacturing and trafficking of synthetic cannabinoids involving 13 provinces and over 40 cities, officials said. They said 360 kilograms (790 pounds) of synthetic cannabinoids were seized. "The problem of new psychoactive substances has been fierce, posing severe challenges to the narcotics control work of all countries and the world. It is also a new situation and new problem and new challenge to China," Deng Ming, deputy director of



Deng Ming, deputy director of China's National Narcotics Control Commission, center removes his mask for a press conference in Beijing on Tuesday, May 11, 2021.

Associated Press

the National Narcotics Control Commission, said at a news conference. The ban did not spec-

ify penalties but China regularly executes people found guilty in drug cases. □



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China adds few babies, loses workers as its 1.4B people age

By JOE McDONALD and HUIZHONG WU

Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — The number of working-age people in China fell over the past decade as its aging population barely grew, a census showed Tuesday, complicating Chinese leaders' efforts to create a more prosperous and influential nation.

The total population rose to 1.411 billion people last year, up 72 million from 2010, according to the once-a-decade census. Slow growth fell closer to zero as fewer couples had children.

That adds to challenges for Chinese leaders who want to create a richer society and increase its global influence by developing technology industries and self-sustaining economic growth based on consumer spending.

The ruling Communist Party has enforced birth limits since 1980 to restrain population growth but worries the workforce is shrinking. It has eased birth limits, but couples are put off by high costs, cramped housing and job discrimination against mothers. The population of potential workers aged 15 to 59 fell to 894 million last year, the National Bureau of Statistics reported. That would be down 5% from a 2011 peak of 925 million. The percentage of children in the population edged up compared with 2010, but the group aged 60 and older grew faster.

Changes in birth limits and other policies "promoted a rebound in the birth population," the bureau director, Ning Jizhe, said at a news conference.

However, Ning said 12 million babies were born last year, which would be down 18% from 2019's 14.6



A woman plays with a child near elderly people on wheelchairs sunbathing on a compound of a commercial office building in Beijing on Monday, May 10, 2021.

Associated Press

million.

China, along with Thailand and some other developing Asian countries that are aging fast, faces what economists call the challenge of whether it can grow rich before it grows old. Some warn China faces a "demographic time bomb."

The potential shortage of workers needed to generate economic activity and tax revenue comes as President Xi Jinping's government boosts spending on its military and efforts to create global competitors in electric cars and other technologies.

Reflecting the issue's sensitivity, the statistics agency took the unusual step last month of announcing the population grew in 2020 but gave no total. That looked like an effort to calm companies and investors after The Financial Times reported the census might have found a surprise decline.

"We are more concerned about the fast decline in the proportion of the work-

ing age population compared to the total population," said Lu Jiehua, a professor of population studies at Peking University.

The working-age population will fall from three-quarters of the total in 2011 to just above half by 2050, according to Lu.

"If the population gets too old, it will be impossible to solve the problem through immigration," said Lu. "It needs to be dealt with at an early stage."

Couples who want a child face daunting challenges. Many share crowded apartments with their parents. Child care is expensive and maternity leave short. Most single mothers are excluded from medical insurance and social welfare payments.

Some women worry giving birth could hurt their careers.

"When you have a kid, you take pregnancy leave, but will you still have this position after you take the leave?" said He Yiwei, who is returning from the United

States after obtaining a master's degree. "Relative to men, when it comes to work, women have to sacrifice more."

Japan, Germany and some other rich countries face the same challenge of supporting aging populations with fewer workers. But they can draw on investments in factories, technology and foreign assets. By contrast, China is a middle-income country with labor-intensive farming and manufacturing.

The decline in the working-age population "will place a cap on China's potential economic growth," said Yue Su of the Economist Intelligence Unit in a report. That is a "powerful incentive to introduce productivity-enhancing reforms."

The International Monetary Fund is forecasting Chinese economic growth of 8.4% this year following a rebound from the coronavirus pandemic. The Communist Party wants to double output per person from 2020 levels by 2035, which would

require annual growth of about 4.7%.

The numbers reported Thursday reflect a gain of 11.8 million people, or 0.8%, over the official estimate for 2019, when the government says the population edged above 1.4 billion for the first time.

The working-age population fell to 63.3% of the total from 70.1% a decade ago. The group up to age 14 expanded by 1.3 percentage points to 17.9%. Those 60 and older a group of 264 million people who on their own would be the world's fourth-biggest country rose 5.4 percentage points to 18.7% of the population.

"Labor resources are still abundant," said Ning of the statistics agency.

The party took its biggest step in 2015 when rules that limited many couples to having only one child were eased to allow two.

However, China's birth rate, paralleling trends in South Korea, Thailand and other Asian economies, already was falling before the one-child rule. The average number of children per mother tumbled from above six in the 1960s to below three by 1980, according to the World Bank. Demographers say official birth limits concealed what would have been a further fall in the number of children per family.

The one-child limit, enforced with threats of fines or loss of jobs, led to abuses including forced abortions. A preference for sons led parents to kill baby girls, prompting warnings millions of men might be unable to find a wife, fueling social tension.

Thursday's data showed China has 105.7 million men and boys for every 100 women and girls, or about 33 million more males. □

Holiday Inn Resort Aruba: Because love never ends

PALM BEACH — Holiday Inn Resort Aruba showers you with love to celebrate the most important event of your life: your wedding. Whether it is a small, intimate happening between the two of you, a gathering with your closest friends and family or a larger group, the resort has it covered. There is one woman who will guide you through it all, from the start to the end. She assures you that everything is arranged for up to the tiniest details, just the way you imagined it. Let us introduce to you Shulaika Isenia, Holiday Inn's wedding specialist. "I am here to make it happen!"

Her calm appearance and skilled way ease every nervous bride-to-be or worried future groom. Shulaika works thorough in a subtle and open minded way. "It is very important to listen close to my client's wishes. To observe and know all the details, that is where it all starts with. My task is to translate the client's wishes into reality to full satisfaction." Her job is to make things easy, take away the stress and she is great at that.

From A to Z

The process begins with contacting the Holiday Inn Resort Aruba where you will be connected to Shulaika. The Holiday Inn Resort Aruba is flexible and details can be adjusted to your personal taste. "Picture yourself and your loved one on the turquoise blue ocean side where it feels as if the beach is all yours. Our resort has this great advantage to be able to offer our wedding guests their 'own corner' where they have the full bar area for themselves, located right on the wide beach." Holiday Inn Aruba Resorts stands out with their

personal approach and upscale service and their Food & Beverage is known all over the island for its consistent quality, quite important on the day of your life. "After the night the resort has their wedding suite made up for you and this means awakening in the romance of the Caribbean sun next morning with the ocean and white-sanded beach stretching in front of you while you enjoy your breakfast." Three romantic wedding packages offer you amazing possibilities where you can be each other's sunshine under Aruba's beautiful blue skies and turquoise waters, witnessing your "I do's" in a very intimate ceremony (package My Sunshine) or make your special day unique with a group of 20 loved ones, to share the event where you promise to love and stay with each other forever and always with your inner circle (package Promises). If you would like to take it up a notch then tie the knot where love transcends all barriers and all limits, let Holiday Inn Aruba Resort be the

one to make this act of overflowing love happen in one of a kind way (package Love Unlimited). Important to mention is that Shulaika and her team are flexible and arrangements can be adjusted to fulfill your exact wishes.

All arrangements by the Holiday Inn Aruba Resort include marriage on the stunning beach with the services of a non-denominational minister, including a wedding certificate as a keepsake. Feel queen and king under the arch of squared bamboo or a circular arch with choice of drapery color and crystals, depending on your choice of package. The signing table, bridal bouquet, matching groom's boutonniere are all part of the life happening and a live musician, photographer and/or videographer are options to consider.

Don't worry, be happy

Put your faith in the hands of Shulaika and her team to organize your vow renewal, engagement or wedding, she will gain your trust

in an instant. The island of Aruba and the Holiday Inn Aruba Resort will make you feel secure as all Covid-19 protocol is in place here and your safety is our priority. Discover Aruba, live your dream event at the Holiday Inn Aruba Resort. We promise you: the resort and the island will make sure you will remember this a lifetime!

For more information:

Contact Shulaika Isenia at +297 586 3600 or send an email to shulaika.isenia@ihg.com.



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New prices for petroleum products May 12, 2021

ORANJESTAD - Minister of Finance, Economic Affairs and Culture announces the sales prices for petroleum products as of May 12, 2021.

Gasoline unleaded premium: 222.1 cents p / ltr. (+ 0.5 cents)

Diesel LS: 174.6 cents p / ltr. (-1.2 cents)

Kerosene: 154.1 cents per liter. (- 0.5 cents)

The above petroleum prices include BBO / BAZV / BAVP



Phases 1 and 2 of the Malmok Boardwalk project have been completed

ORANJESTAD - The Minister of Tourism, Health and Sports, Mr. Dangui Oduber, announced that the Malmok Boardwalk is ready.

The project started in February 2019 and was carried out in two phases. This project was funded by the Tourism Product Enhancement Fund (TPEF). This was a necessary project to improve the area in the high rise hotels. The Malmok Boardwalk gives the community an ideal location for those who exercise and also to encourage others to exercise.

The Malmok Boardwalk extends from the Arashi intersection to the Fishermen Huts area. Phase 1 of the project consisted of 240 meters of hardwood includ-



ing pavers. It includes reflective bollards to protect pedestrians from nearby

traffic and to demarcate the parking areas.

The second and final phase was the construction of the pedestrian walkway, which consists of a concrete walkway, pavement with cobblestones, posts, more lighting and a promenade at the Fishermen Huts. The second phase also includes a newly built central reservation near the intersection leading to the Fishermen Huts parking lot. □



Aruba to me is.... Falling in love over and over again

ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a wonderful story and picture from **Ken & Gladly Toth**.

They wrote:

"My husband, Ken, and I honeymooned in Aruba in May 1996, and we knew before our trip was over that we would be back to celebrate our next anniversary. We have fallen in love with the island and the people and have now returned each year for the past 25 consecutive years to celebrate every anniversary. Unfortunately, our May 2020 was cancelled but we rebooked for September 2020, and celebrated then. Many of the 25 years we also came in December, and have "come home" over 40 times! We love Aruba and hope to return many more years to come."



Congratulations Ken & Gladly on your special anniversary. We wish you many more years filled with love and blessings!

From Aruba Today Team.

Aruba Tourism Authority: Aruba welcomed a total of 58.774 visitors in April 2021 63% of the total visitors of 2019

ORANJESTAD — Aruba Tourism Authority would like to inform our community of the current situation of our tourism industry according to information compiled at this moment from different sectors.

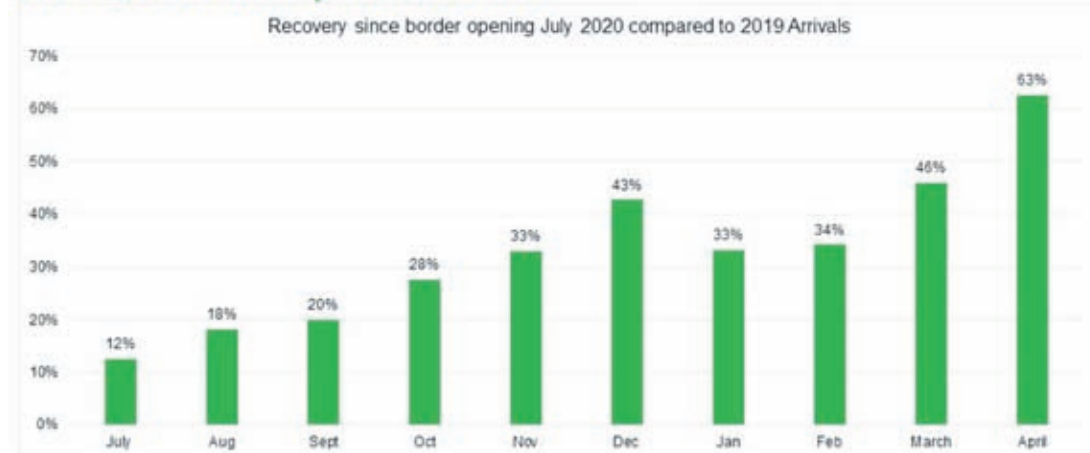
'STAY-OVER' Tourism

During the month of April 2021 our island welcomed a total of 58.774 'stay-over' visitors. Of this total, 53.556 were from North America, 2.530 from Europe, 1.655 visitors from Latin America and 1.033 from other countries in the region.

Cruise Tourism

The cruise industry has been paralyzed since the beginning of the pandemic. Recently, it was announced that Aruba is part of the itinerary of Celebrity Cruise lines which will re-initiate their services in June of 2021. However a definitive date has not been given yet for the start of this operation for the Caribbean.

Arrivals 2021 compared to 2019



The cruise industry is pending for the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) to approve the recommendations and protocols related to Covid-19 for cruise ships. There are currently cruise ships stationed at our harbor as 'warm lay-up', meaning they are on standby pending instructions upon startup of the operation. This activity produces an income for our economy. There are no tourist on the ships only crew members

(skeleton crew) and they all have to comply to all rules and protocols locally and internationally.

What to expect for the remaining of 2021?

Based on different current developments and analysis a forecast is being observed for the 2nd quarter of 2021. Projections show an increase of 15% to 37% compared to the first quarter of 2021, in which A.T.A. received a total of 112,317 visitors. The revised projec-

tion indicates that Aruba will be closing 2021 with a "cautious optimistic" scenario (recovery vs. 2019: 55%) instead of a "conservative" scenario (recovery vs. 2019: 45%). When comparing the first quarter of 2021 to the first quarter of 2020, this shows a grade of recovery 49%. And if compared to the same quarter of 2019 the grade of recovery is 38%.

Tourism Credits/Centrale Bank of Aruba

According to the Centrale Bank the so-called 'Tourism Credits' (priorly known as 'Tourism Receipts') for the first 9 months of 2020 contributed with AWG 1.905.2 million for our economy which is 49% less compared to the same period in 2019. This is due to the closing of the border due to the Covid-19 pandemic that started in March 2020 and lasted up till July 2020.

Just as any other destination our island is going through some challenges due to the global pandemic. To maintain our established protocols it is extremely important to reduce the amount of active cases in our community. The wellbeing of our residents and visitors are important and adhering to all protocols will contribute to the recovery of our economy. Together we shall overcome this and our tourism will flourish again.□

AHATA: Hotel occupancy in April was 36% lower than in 2019

ORANJESTAD — The Aruba Hotel & Tourism Association has released the most recent hotel performance results, which shows that hotel occupancy increased from March levels to 52.7% in April.

TIMESHARE

AHATA's Timeshare properties experienced a 74% occupancy rate in April, and project an average occupancy of 74% for May 2021.

April 2021:

- **Occupancy:** The occupancy rate was 52.7%, which is 45% higher than March and 36.2% lower than in 2019. It should be noted that Aruba's borders were closed in April 2020.
- **ADR:** The average daily rate (for occupied rooms) was \$246.96, which is a decline of 14% compared to 2019.
- **RevPAR:** The revenue per available room achieved was \$130.08; 45% lower than 2019.

OCCUPANCY FORECAST:

	Occupancy	Occ level compared to 2019
May	58%	71%
June	61%	74%
July	65%	73%
August	60%	69%
2021	55%	65%

AHATA member hotels: Amsterdam Manor Beach Resort, Barceló Aruba, Boardwalk Boutique Hotel, Brickell Bay Beach Club, Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort, Courtyard by Marriott, Divi & Tamarijn All-Inclusive, Eagle Aruba Resort, Holiday Inn Resort Aruba, Hyatt Regency Aruba, Hyatt Place Aruba Airport, Manchebo Beach Resort, Marriott Aruba & Stellaris Casino, Paradera Park, Renaissance Aruba Resort, The Ritz-Carlton Aruba, RIU Palace Aruba, RIU Palace Antillas, Talk of the Town Hotel.

AHATA member timeshares: Divi Aruba Phoenix, Divi Dutch Village, Divi Village Golf, La Cabana, Marriott Ocean Club, Marriott Surf Club. □



The vaccination centers will remain open on Ascension Day, May 13 and Friday May 14, 2021

ORANJESTAD - The National Vaccination Campaign against Covid19 has not ended. So far, a total of 56,009 individuals have received at least one vaccine representing 56% of the target. While the effectiveness of the vaccines is evident given the decline in the number of new cases, it is still very important for those who have not yet received the vaccine to get vaccinated anyway. Covid has not disappeared and is still circulating and is still a threat to those who have not yet been vaccinated as they can become infected and become ill.

The Department of Public Health (DVG) urges anyone who has not yet been vaccinated to do so as soon as possible at either the Centro Libertador Betico Croes in Santa Cruz

from Monday to Saturday from 8:30 am to 7:00 pm or at the Teresita Center in San Nicolas, Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 11.30am and from 1.30pm to 4.30pm for their vaccine. No appointment is required for the first vaccine and individuals can walk in and receive their vaccine at one of two locations. The second vaccine should be administered 3 weeks after receiving the first vaccine and can simply be walked in at one of the locations. The vaccination campaign will normally take place on May 13 and 14 during the aforementioned opening times.□



Millennial Money: A flashy credit card may not fit you best

By **SARA RATHNER**
of **NerdWallet**

The credit card you pluck out of your wallet can make as much of a statement as the purse or pants you keep your wallet in. With cards touting sleek metal designs, luxury perks and loyalty program status upgrades, simply carrying a flashy card can make you look like the kind of person who has access to whatever it is they hide behind velvet ropes.

Brand recognition is big, and credit card companies benefit from loyalty and familiarity (sometimes you can benefit from loyalty, too — more on that later). Depending on what you need out of a credit card, though, the option that looks impressive may actually leave you wanting more. It can pay to be practical and even consider a card you may not have heard of before, or carry multiple cards at once for different types of purchases. I've carried high-end cards with pricey annual fees and fancy benefits, and no-fee cards with few extras beyond rewards on my spending. Sometimes I needed the 24/7 concierge service when booking travel, and other times I just needed to earn cash back on pet food. Here's how I look at credit cards when I'm deciding which to apply for and which to use on a purchase.

THINGS THAT ARE MORE IM-



This Aug. 11, 2019 file photo shows Visa credit cards in New Orleans.

PORTANT THAN LOOKS

Forget the surface-level stuff. You should be able to squeeze a lot of value out of every card you carry, especially if those cards charge a premium-level annual fee. Keep these factors in mind:

— **COST TO CARRY:** Consider the card's fees. The annual fee is typically the biggest expense if a card charges one, but cards also may charge for late payments, foreign transactions and more. Compare these costs with the dollar value of any benefits you intend to use. This includes the value of a sign-up bonus and other rewards you earn

through your spending, plus other perks like Global Entry (\$100 in value) or an annual travel statement credit. Ideally, the benefits outweigh the card's cost. And remember, a perk you don't use is worth nothing at all.

— **HOW YOU EARN REWARDS:** Aim for a card that earns more where you spend the most. That could be a card with a higher rewards rate in specific spending categories (like travel, groceries or dining out), or a card that earns the same rate of points, miles or cash back on every purchase.

— **REDEMPTION OPTIONS:**

Consider how much each point is worth when redeemed for cash back, travel, gift cards or other options. NerdWallet's 2019 Travel Credit Card Study found that the average value of a point or mile is around 1 cent, but point values may be higher or lower depending on what you decide to redeem them for. And remember: Points and miles are worth nothing until you redeem them, so don't let them sit in your account forever.

— **OTHER PERKS:** Some extras offer time-saving convenience. Priority boarding on flights and late check-out at hotels are common

credit card benefits that make travel less stressful.

WHEN TO PAY ATTENTION TO A CREDIT CARD'S BRAND

Sticking to one bank or loyalty program can help you keep things simple, especially if you prefer to manage all your accounts in one place. You can more easily optimize rewards this way by transferring them to one central account or to a card with better perks or redemption rates. Here are times to stay loyal to a brand, plus one instance where you won't be able to:

— YOU ALREADY HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ISSUER:

Some banks make loyalty worth your while, granting you a higher rewards rate for having other accounts with them. You may need to keep a minimum amount of money deposited in a bank account to qualify.

— YOU CAN COMBINE POINTS FROM MULTIPLE SOURCES INTO ONE POOLED ACCOUNT:

Certain credit card rewards programs let you combine points earned on multiple credit cards into one account. You may also be able to combine points with members of your household. If an airline or hotel offers multiple co-branded credit cards, they can all feed into one loyalty program account. This makes it easier to maximize your earning potential within one rewards ecosystem. □

Associated Press

AAA sees a huge jump in travel over Memorial Day weekend



In this March 31, 2021 file photo, traffic moves along the Interstate 76 highway in Philadelphia. If you're traveling over the Memorial Day weekend, expect lots of company.

Associated Press

By **The Associated Press**

U.S. highways will be far busier over the Memorial Day holiday weekend than last year, but traffic still won't reach pre-pandemic levels, according to a forecast by the AAA auto club.

AAA officials say travel will increase because more Americans have been vaccinated against COVID-19 about one-third of U.S. adults and consumer confidence is growing.

The auto club and insurance company said Tuesday it expects more than 37 million people to travel at least 50 miles from home during the holiday weekend, up 60% from last year, which was the lowest since AAA began keeping records in 2000.

If the AAA forecast is right, however, it would still be 6 million people, or 13%, fewer than left home over Memorial Day in 2019.

AAA said 34 million Americans plan driving trips between May 27 and May 31, a 52% increase over last year, and nearly 2.5 million will take plane trips, nearly six times more than the same period in 2020. A small number will take buses or trains.

So far in May, nearly 1.5 million people per day have gone through U.S. airport checkpoints, according to the Transportation Security Administration.

AAA said its air-travel forecast seems low because it counts each traveler once, while TSA counts somebody twice if they take a round-trip flight. □

Pandemic gives boost as more states move to digital IDs

By SOPHIA EPPOLITO America
Associated Press/Report for SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — The

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

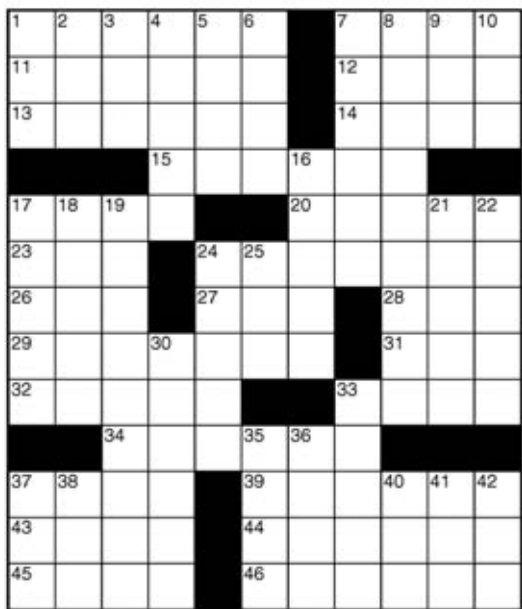
ACROSS 44 Visit
1 Camera support
7 Goofing off
11 Salt additive
12 Bring up
13 Posture
14 Gymnast Korbut
15 Zodiac twins
17 Young ones
20 Coffee bar order
23 Flamenco cry
24 Droopy-eared dog
26 Buddy
27 Price setting
28 Cereal bit
29 Copy
31 Sch. founded by Jefferson
32 Reef material
33 Manual reader
34 Completes, as a comic strip
37 Overly eager
39 Mysterious
43 One of the Beatles

DOWN 1 "My country — of thee"
2 Go bad
3 Lupino of film
4 Sonar sounds
5 Formerly
6 Consider
7 Patch type
8 Yummy
9 Fall behind
10 Geologic period
16 Pol's concern



Yesterday's answer

17 Subject
18 San Antonio landmark
19 Walking on air
21 Throw one
22 Church feature
24 Celery serving
25 Contrived
30 Snarl
33 Cousin's dad
35 Pillage
36 Persia, today
37 Clumsy
38 Lass
40 Copying
41 Wordless approval
42 Print units



5-12

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

5-12

CRYPTOQUOTE

HG SD VPI'U LOMIZD, SD

VPI'U ZNPS. HG SD VPI'U

ZNPS, SD MNDI'U NDMAAF

AHRHIZ. — ZMHA XODDOF

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: WE CANNOT CHANGE ANYTHING UNTIL WE ACCEPT IT. CONDEMNATION DOES NOT LIBERATE, IT OPPRESSES. — CARL JUNG



Ryan Williams, with the Utah Drivers License Division, displays his cell phone with the pilot version of the state's mobile ID on Wednesday, May 5, 2021, in West Valley City, Utah.

Associated Press

card that millions of people use to prove their identity to everyone from police officers to liquor store owners may soon be a thing of the past as a growing number of states develop digital driver's licenses.

With the advent of digital wallets and boarding passes, people are relying more on their phones to prove their identity. At least five states have implemented a mobile driver's license program. Three others — Utah, Iowa and Florida — intend to launch programs by next year, with more expected to follow suit.

Mobile licenses will give people more privacy by allowing them to decide what personal information they share, state officials say. The licenses offer privacy control options that allow people to verify their age when purchasing alcohol or renting a car, while hiding other personal information like their address.

Having a mobile driver's license will allow people to update their license information remotely without having to go to a state's Department of Motor Vehicles or waiting for a new card in the mail, said Lee Howell, state relations manager at the American Automobile Association.

While most states with these programs recommend that

users still carry their physical driver's license as a backup, some industry experts estimate that the coronavirus pandemic has sped up the widespread adoption of contactless identification methods by at least a decade.

"Most people want some kind of a hard token for their identity, but I don't know how long that will last," said Pam Dixon, executive director of the World Privacy Forum. "I would imagine that at some point, maybe in a generation, maybe less, that people will accept a fully digital system." In most states, people's data will be stored on their phone and with the DMV. People will only be able to access a mobile ID app with a passcode or using a smartphone's fingerprint or facial recognition scan.

Industry leaders say safeguards will prevent anyone's information from being stolen, but some critics argue that having so much personal data on a phone is too risky.

"When you have a physical thing in your hand, no one can hack that unless you lose it," said Shelia Dunn Joneleit, a spokesperson for the National Motorists Association.

Joneleit noted that the new systems aren't accessible to all Americans be-

cause not everyone can afford a smartphone. She said that could eventually produce equity issues because some states require residents to show their driver's license to vote.

She also said she doesn't believe drivers should be handing their phones over to police, potentially violating people's Fourth Amendment rights against unreasonable searches and seizures.

State officials and industry leaders say that moving away from physical IDs that could potentially be fraudulent to cryptographic verification will make it easier to confirm someone's identity.

"The majority of the way that people verify your identity in person today is by visual inspection of the identity document," said Matt Thompson, senior vice president of IDEMIA, a technology company working on several states' mobile ID apps. "As we move to cryptographic verification, it's a lot easier to verify the authenticity of a document through digital means."

IDEMIA has launched mobile ID apps in three states this year and expects to launch an additional seven before 2021 ends, said Angie Hamblen, the company's senior marketing manager. □

Classifieds

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Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
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TV's growth is a boon for 'diverse voices' among novelists

By LYNN ELBER

AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Growing up an avid reader, Kwana Jackson knew where to look for romance novels with Black characters: Segregated in the "African American interest" section where only determined shoppers would find them. When Jackson became a published author she saw other ways in which writers of color were obscured, potentially affecting both book sales and the odds their work would catch the entertainment industry's attention.

"That's why, after 10 novels, I was surprised and thrilled when my agent came to me and said, 'We've had interest in 'Real Men Knit,'" Jackson said of her 2020 novel about four brothers in New York's Harlem, optioned by a production company for a potential TV series.

What she calls a dream come true is a pragmatic reflection of the unprecedented number of TV outlets in need of shows and growing pressure for inclusive fare — a one-two punch creating opportunities for overlooked writers and ignored perspectives. "There's a huge appetite for diverse voices and for almost forgotten voices," said Steve Fisher, head of intellectual property and a partner at the APA talent agency.

While the entertainment industry was born hungry for adaptations — a 1908 version of "The Count of Monte Cristo" is early proof — today's beneficiaries include writers of color, those in the LGBTQ community and women.

When Jason Bateman's film and TV production company sought the rights to APA client Tess Sharpe's novel "The Girls I've Been," Fisher met with executive Tracey



This combination photo shows cover art for "Real Men Knit," left, and a portrait of author Kwana Jackson. This combination photo shows cover art for "Real Men Knit," left, and a portrait of author Kwana Jackson.

Nyberg, who explained the company's keen interest: Sharpe represents both a female and LGBTQ point of view "and we want to be part of the vanguard of new voices out there," Fisher recalled Nyberg saying. Science fiction and young-adult author M.K. England's debut novel was quickly snapped up. England identifies as nonbinary and queer, and their characters reflect varied ethnic and religious backgrounds along with LGBTQ diversity. England's space adventure "The Disasters" was optioned before its late 2018 hard-cover publication and is in development for the CW network. While England knows adaptations differ from source material, they will take the win if the series comes to fruition — which, they realistically note, isn't guaranteed.

"I just love the work so much, I love the characters so much," England said. "Just the chance of those

getting out to more people means a lot, even though I know they will not be the same versions I wrote."

Payment for screen rights is a welcome addition to a writer's income, but "nobody's getting wealthy over here," England said. "All I want is a sustainable career. I'm not looking for Scrooge McDuck'ing it." Jackson, who said she strives to write stories that portray Black and other ethnic characters fully, both in conflict and love, believes such depictions on TV have the power to chip away at stereotypes and build empathy.

"We need to change that perception of how we've been shown. We are just like anyone else, with real stories, real love, real joy, real problems," she said.

Sean Berard, literary manager with the Grandview management agency, credits publishers for making the effort to find stories that are "coming from

authentic places" and for bringing deserved attention to their authors.

"We hear from time to time a (rights) scramble for a certain project, a certain book, that's not even published," Berard said.

Such fierce competition was inevitable. Within a year's time, Netflix, Amazon and Hulu were joined by new streaming services including Disney+, Apple TV+, HBO Max and Peacock, all jockeying for viewers and justifying their subscription fees alongside premium cable channels including HBO and Showtime.

Overall demand by the entertainment industry for content has "increased exponentially" in the last few years, said Michael Cader, founder of the Publishers Marketplace newsletter. Streaming services are among the neediest outlets, and book-related content "often brings a built-in audience and respect," he said.

They industry has also become acutely aware of demands for change, facing organized criticism in the form of #OscarsSoWhite and the #MeToo movement, among others, and within the context of the country's rising social and

political tensions.

Established writers are among the beneficiaries of the scramble for content, including those whose literary novels make for a more challenging transfer to the screen. Colson Whitehead, for example, has been "a fabulous writer for decades and now he's finally getting his adaptation," Cader said.

Whitehead's 2016 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel "The Underground Railroad" is the African American writer's inaugural work brought to the screen, the basis of an Amazon series debuting May 14.

Sci-fi and fantasy author N.K. Jemisin became the first Black writer to win the prestigious Hugo Award for best novel, for 2015's "The Fifth Season," then made it three in a row. Jemisin's work has yet to be adapted, but her "The Inheritance Trilogy" reportedly was optioned earlier this year.

Although Black-themed projects have been in the forefront, producers are beginning to cast a wider net. Native American author Angeline Boulley's 2021 debut novel "Firekeeper's Daughter," a thriller set on an Ojibwe reservation, is being developed for Netflix by Barack and Michelle Obama's production company. Charles Yu's National Book Award-winning 2020 novel "Interior Chinatown" is in development for Hulu, which ordered a pilot based on the forthcoming debut novel "Olga Dies Dreaming" by Xochitl Gonzalez.

Despite the signs of change, M.K. England, for one, isn't ready to sit back and applaud.

"People say, 'Everything's fine now, we have achieved equality here, the industry is no longer racist or homophobic because, see, we have these things,'" England said. "It's just not the case. There's still lots and lots of work to be done, especially in terms of race representation and having people of color actually in the industry, calling the shots." □



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Baffert: Antifungal meds given to Medina Spirit had steroid

By **STEPHEN WHYNO**

AP Sports Writer

BALTIMORE (AP) — Kentucky Derby winner Medina Spirit was treated with an antifungal ointment containing the steroid betamethasone that may have caused the horse to fail a postrace drug test, trainer Bob Baffert said Tuesday. In a statement issued by his lawyer, Baffert said Medina Spirit was treated for dermatitis with the ointment once a day leading up to the May 1 race and that equine pharmacology experts have told him this could explain the test results. Baffert said the horse tested positive for 21 picograms of the substance, which is typically given to horses therapeutically to help their joints and is a violation even at a trace amount on race day in Kentucky.

Regardless of the reason, Medina Spirit would be disqualified from the Derby and Mandaloun named the winner if a second round of testing shows the presence of betamethasone. Preakness officials said Medina Spirit and Baffert's other horses running at Pimlico Race Course this weekend will be allowed to enter the race, subject to additional testing and



Kentucky Derby winner Medina Spirit is groomed after a morning exercise at Pimlico Race Course ahead of the Preakness Stakes horse race, Tuesday, May 11, 2021, in Baltimore.

Associated Press

monitoring.

"My investigation is continuing, and we do not know for sure if this ointment was the cause of the test results, or if the test results are even accurate, as they have yet to be confirmed by the split sample," Baffert said. "I have been told that a finding of a small amount, such as 21 picograms, could be consistent with application of this type of ointment." Baffert said at a news conference Sunday at Churchill Downs that he did not know how the sub-

stance made its way into the colt's system.

Dr. Mary Scollay, executive director and chief operating officer of the Racing Medication & Testing Consortium, was surprised the situation went from no explanation to "documented, chronic exposure to the medication."

"We know that the horse was exposed — deliberately exposed — on a daily basis to betamethasone," Scollay said Tuesday via phone. "So, yes, it is not implausible that this is the

source of the betamethasone in the horse."

Medina Spirit drew the No. 3 post in a field of 10 horses for the Preakness, attempting to win the first two legs of the Triple Crown with a giant asterisk. He is the 5-2 morning line favorite, though actually Medina Spirit getting to the starting gate Saturday is pending additional tests that Maryland Racing chief veterinary officer Dr. Dionne Benson expects back Friday. As is the case in Kentucky, no level of betamethasone

is allowed in a horse's system going into a race in Maryland, so the presence of it could lead to Medina Spirit being scratched.

Medina Spirit and stablemate Concert Tour arrived at Pimlico Race Course on Monday and jogged on the track Tuesday morning, though Baffert does not plan to be in Baltimore for the race and put assistant Jimmy Barnes in charge.

"Medina Spirit earned his Kentucky Derby win, and my pharmacologists have told me that 21 picograms of betamethasone would have had no effect on the outcome of the race," Baffert said. "Medina Spirit is a deserved champion, and I will continue to fight for him."

Medina Spirit's failed drug test is the fifth medication violation in the past 13 months for Baffert, a two-time Triple Crown-winning trainer and the face of the sport. Winning the Preakness with either Medina Spirit or Concert Tour would give Baffert a record eighth victory in that race, breaking a tie with 19th-century trainer R.W. Walden.

Except for 2020, when the Triple Crown races were run out of order, Baffert is undefeated with the Derby winner in the Preakness. □

Dombrowski wins his 1st stage, De Marchi takes Giro lead

SESTOLA, Italy (AP) — American cyclist Joseph Dombrowski held off the rest of the breakaway pack to win the fourth stage of the Giro d'Italia on Tuesday for his first victory in a Grand Tour, and Alessandro De Marchi took the leader's pink jersey.

Dombrowski, who rides for UAE Team Emirates, attacked on the first uphill finish of this year's race and crossed the line 12 seconds ahead of De Marchi.

It was the 29-year-old Dombrowski's first pro win outside of the United States.

"I was feeling good in the last 50K and was just trying not to do too much work and be conservative, because I knew the last climb was really a tough one,"

Dombrowski said. "I was able to get a gap, and it wasn't enough for the pink jersey but I think the stage win is a nice way to finish the day."

Filippo Fiorelli was third, 27 seconds behind Dombrowski at the end of a wet and windy 187-kilometer (116-mile) ride through the Apennines from Piacenza to Sestola.

De Marchi took over the lead from Filippo Ganna, who had led the the Giro since winning the time trial that opened the race on Saturday. The 34-year-old De Marchi has a 22-second advantage over Dombrowski and 42 seconds over third-place Louis Vervaeke.

"I started thinking about

taking the Maglia Rosa (pink jersey) two days ago but I didn't tell anybody," De Marchi said. "Today it was about finding the right move. I knew it would be tricky at the start. A bit of luck helped and here we are."

"I'm lost for words. The Maglia Rosa is the childhood dream of every cyclist, especially for an Italian."

João Almeida was one of the favorites to win the Giro after leading the race for 15 days last year but his chances are all but over after losing more than four minutes on Tuesday.

Wednesday's fifth stage is a flat and straight 177-kilometer (110-mile) route from Modena to Cattolica on



Joseph Lloyd Dombrowski, of the United States, celebrates winning the 4th stage of the Giro d'Italia, tour of Italy cycling race from Piacenza to Sestola, Italy, Tuesday, May 11, 2021.

Associated Press

the Adriatic coast.

The Giro finishes on May 30

in Milan with an individual time trial. □

Westbrook breaks Robertson's NBA triple-double record

By **GEORGE HENRY**

AP Sports Writer

ATLANTA (AP) — Oscar Robertson's NBA record of 181 triple-doubles had stood since 1974 and was once thought to be untouchable — until Russell Westbrook surpassing it became inevitable.

Westbrook got it done Monday night, hardly a surprise given that he's averaging a triple-double this season and this was his 36th, including seven in his last eight games.

"I normally don't like to pat myself on the back but tonight I will just because I'm so grateful for the ones before me and so blessed to the man above to allow me to go out and do it," Westbrook said. "I take this job very seriously and I'm super grateful for my teammates and coaches on my journey so far."

The 32-year-old Westbrook, in his 13th season overall and his first with the Washington Wizards, completed his 182nd triple-double when he grabbed his 10th rebound with 8:29 remaining in the game against the Atlanta Hawks. He finished with 28 points, 13 rebounds and 21 assists and missed a potential game-winning 3-pointer as the Wizards lost 125-124.

Although triple-doubles happen more frequently than in Robertson's era thanks to the pace of the



Washington Wizards' Russell Westbrook, left, shoots over Atlanta Hawks' Bogdan Bogdanovic, right, during the first half of an NBA basketball game Monday, May 10, 2021, in Atlanta.

Associated Press

contemporary NBA game, Westbrook has no peer for how routinely he fills the stat sheet. Magic Johnson is third all-time with 138 triple-doubles. Jason Kidd finished his career with 107, and LeBron James is the closest among active play-

ers with 99. Westbrook began the night averaging 11.5 assists, tops in the NBA and the only player in double digits. He ranked sixth in rebounds with 11.6 per game and was averaging 22 points. He has triple-doubles in five straight games,

three of them before the start of the fourth quarter. Westbrook, the 2016-17 MVP and a nine-time All-Star, praised Robertson after he tied the record in Saturday's overtime win at Indiana. He had 33 points, 19 rebounds and 15 assists, closing out the game with a blocked shot.

"It's just a blessing," Westbrook said Monday night. "You put so much into the game. You put in so much time. You sacrifice so much and to be able to mentioned with guys like Oscar and Magic and Jason Kidd and those guys, it's just something I never dreamt about when I was a young kid growing up in LA. I'm truly grateful for moments like this."

Washington acquired Westbrook in a trade with Houston for John Wall before the season, reuniting Westbrook with coach Scott Brooks, who guided him to that MVP season with Oklahoma City.

The Wizards, who are trying to secure a spot in the post-season play-in tournament, were playing the first of at least two games without Bradley Beal, the NBA's No. 2 scorer who has a strained left hamstring.

That was nothing new for Westbrook, who has seven triple-doubles in nine games that Beal has missed. Westbrook also has at least 15 assists in five

straight games, the longest streak in the league since Steve Nash in 2007-08.

"They're witnessing a guy who competes every single possession," Brooks said. "Not a lot of guys you can say that about. I see it, but he does. He competes. Oscar Robertson is special. What he did was incredible. That's why no one's come close to it in 50 years. We always say that every record is meant to be broken. I don't know that anybody's ever going to get to this again, but he's definitely set it to another level now. He passed one of the greatest of all-time to ever play the game."

Westbrook had eight triple-doubles during his first six seasons in Oklahoma City. Then something clicked, and he's produced 174 over the last seven seasons. His league-leading 36 this season is the second-highest total of his career. He had 42 in 2016-17 when he became the first player since Robertson in 1961-62 to average a triple-double. He will match that feat for the fourth time in five seasons.

"I just want to thank him and the things (Robertson) was able to do for the game. I probably wouldn't be doing some of the things I'm able to do now without his sacrifice and the things he did for the game as well," Westbrook said. □

Joshua-Fury fight set for Saudi Arabia, says promoter

LONDON (AP) — The all-British fight between Anthony Joshua and Tyson Fury for the undisputed world heavyweight title will take place in Saudi Arabia, promoter Eddie Hearn said on Tuesday. Hearn, who represents Joshua, said the fight is likely to take place on Aug. 7 or Aug. 14. He said Aug. 14 is his preferred date because the Olympic Games in Tokyo will have finished, making the Joshua-Fury fight a bigger "global spectacle."

"It's a very bad secret that

the fight is happening in Saudi Arabia," Hearn told British broadcaster Sky Sports.

"To be honest with you, I don't mind giving you that information."

Fury's U.S. promoter, Bob Arum, has previously said Saudi Arabia would be the location of the fight.

Hearn has yet to respond to The Associated Press' request to confirm the details of the fight.

It would be Joshua's second fight in the kingdom. He reclaimed his WBA, IBF and WBO belts from Andy

Ruiz there in December 2019. Joshua's only fight since saw him retain his titles by knocking out Kubrat Pulev in December. Fury hasn't fought since beating Deontay Wilder in February last year to capture the WBC title.

Fury and Joshua have called each other out over Twitter over the last 24 hours, both urging the other to finalize terms for the fight.

Hearn said the "deal is done" but there was frustration on both sides that the fight had not been of-



Defending champion Andy Ruiz Jr., left, takes a right cross to the face during his fight against Britain's Anthony Joshua in their World Heavyweight Championship contest at the Diriyah Arena, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in this Dec. 8, 2019, file photo.

Associated Press

ficially announced. "From our perspective and AJ's perspective, we're ready to go," he

said. "From Tyson Fury's perspective, they've got a couple of lawyers across it from their point. □